

Bridges

by Eileen Vizenor

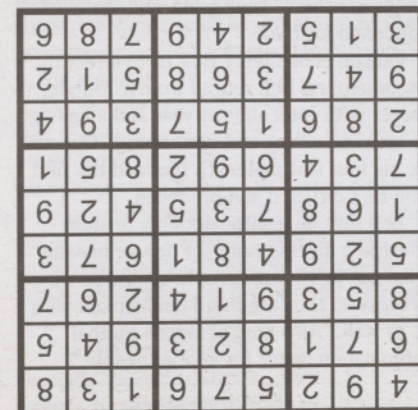
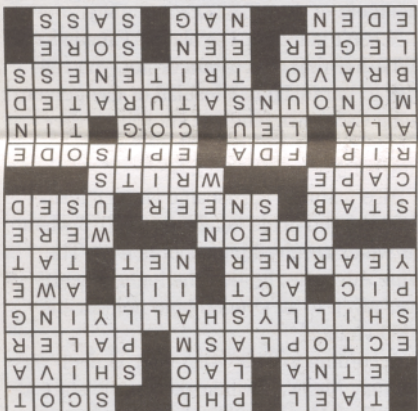
Bridges to there. Bridges to here. Bridges that go up, and bridges that go down. Bridges to walk or ride on. Bridges to admire views from.

Portland is referred to as "Bridge City" and one of my favorites would be the St. John's Bridge I love its renaissance style, as if it was leading to a castle on the other side.

However, my favorite bridge would definitely be the bridge that closes all negative gaps. The bridge that ends all hatred, abuse, judgments, violence and racism.

Each one of us can be a bridge that supports love, understanding, compassion and empathy. Bridges to support each one of us!

Answers to puzzles on page 15



VENDOR PROFILE Louis Adams

BY LEONORA KO
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Louis Adams is back indoors after being homeless for 17 years. "It is just like winning the lottery," he says.

Louis had just been chased out of his camping spot when he got the news he could move into Bud Clark Commons. The Commons is an award-winning building that opened in 2011 and provides apartments for people who are homeless. The studio apartments have full kitchens and baths, and the complex has a community room with television and other amenities. The controlled-access building has a 24-hour desk and Home Forward staff who provide services to the residents.

The staff asked Louis if he could move in that day.

Louis told them, "You bet I can. My stuff's packed up and just down the street. I'll be back within an hour."

"I brought everything I had left that hadn't been stolen," Louis says. "That would consist of a sleeping bag, a pillow, some tarps, my cellphone, a cellphone charger ... couple of new drinking glasses that I was starting to accumulate when I got on the inside. Really there wasn't much else, except some clothes.

"I had a shopping cart that I kept my stuff in. So that way, it was easy to move and I didn't have to make numerous trips. It didn't take long to move in, let me tell you."

When Louis first moved in, it was hard to

sleep. "You know it was kind of eerie because I'm so used to noise. Freeway noise over my head. People fighting all the time. When I got into that silence, it was really kind of strange. I had to open up the windows, the door and everything else just so I could let some noise in," he says and laughs.

Now Louis sleeps better, and "it's nice to be able to take a shower every day, cook my own meals, stuff like that."

Shortly after moving in, Louis was offered a dishwashing job at Trader Vic's, where he often sells Street Roots. Unfortunately, he recently had a mini-stroke that temporarily paralyzed his hand.

"The job was going great, right up until that happened. I can't do pots and pans. I can't lift nothing right now," he says. "But there's been quite a bit of

improvement already, so I'm hoping to return within a week."

Medical issues pushed Louis to the top of the waiting list to enter Bud Clark Commons.

"I applied four years ago when the place first opened up, and I didn't quite qualify to get in there. I guess there wasn't enough wrong with me yet," he says, laughing again.

This time, Outside In staff qualified him. Louis has friends and acquaintances at the Commons, but he is most looking forward to having his daughter and grandson over for dinner.

"If it weren't for my daughter and my grandson, I probably would have given up a long time ago," he says. "(My daughter) is the coolest thing that ever happened to me in my life. The day I cut the cord is something I won't ever forget. I can still close my eyes and see it.

"I missed quite a bit of her life, you know, after the divorce. But I've seen how she's grown. How mature she's become. How smart she really is. Coming from two screw-up parents, she's really done good for herself."

Louis is grateful to the people who have helped him.

He says, "I'd like to thank Haven at Outside In and the (Home Forward) staff at Bud Clark Commons for helping me get in.

"I'd also like to thank all my readers and supporters for helping me out over the years.

"Street Roots is a big part of my life. It's a big plus anytime you're employed. It makes a big difference. It helps you keep your self-respect and self-esteem.

"Let the customers know, without their help, it wouldn't have been possible for me to get off of the streets."

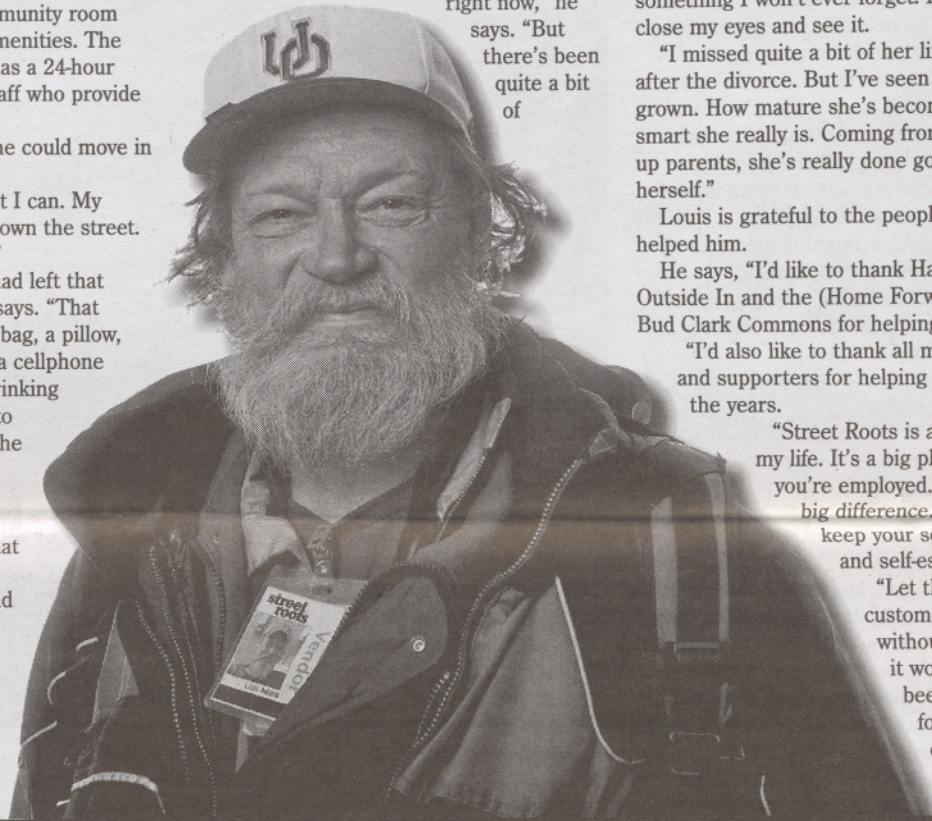


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